

00:00:00	Jesse Thorn	Promo	Hey all, it's Jesse. As 2020 draws to a close, think about what you're thankful for, other than—I'm willing to bet—2020 drawing to a close. What got you through the year? Odds are, if you're hearing my voice, public radio was one of the things. Public radio gave you accurate, dependable news about the election on the pandemic, information about local stories that matter to you. You got fun and fascinating interviews from shows like <i>Bullseye</i> . If you wanna show your gratitude at the end of this year, consider supporting your local public radio station. Public radio stations really need your help right now, more than ever. And it's really easy to do! Just go to Donate.NPR.org/bullseye and give whatever you can. And thanks.
00:00:42	Music	Transition	Gentle, trilling music with a steady drumbeat plays under the dialogue.
00:00:44	Promo	Promo	Speaker: <i>Bullseye with Jesse Thorn</i> is a production of MaximumFun.org and is distributed by NPR.
00:00:55	Music	Transition	<i>[Music fades out.]</i> "Huddle Formation" from the album <i>Thunder, Lightning, Strike</i> by The Go! Team.
00:01:02	Jesse	Host	It's <i>Bullseye</i> . I'm Jesse Thorn. Dick Van Dyke turned 95 this month. 95! That alone is a remarkable feat. But there's, of course, so much more to Dick Van Dyke than simply having been born before TV was invented. He's a legend of stage and screen. <i>The Dick Van Dyke Show</i> , <i>Mary Poppins</i> , <i>Bye Bye Birdie</i> , so many more. And he's still performing today. To celebrate Dick's birthday, we're replaying my interview with him from 2015 when he was only 90. He'd just written a book called <i>Keep Moving</i> , which is—you know. What he does! He sings and dances every day. He goes to the grocery store and says hi to Debbie, his favorite cashier. He'll even sing a song or two on stage every now and again.
00:02:07	Sound Effect	Transition	Anyway, before we get into our conversation, here's a bit of one of the greatest TV comedies of all time: <i>The Dick Van Dyke Show</i> . Rob and Laura—played by Dick Van Dyke and Mary Tyler Moore, of course—have accidentally eavesdropped on their neighbors and they don't like what they heard. But the neighbors are coming over to play charades. Laura is acting out the name of a song. Music swells and fades.
00:02:08	Clip	Clip	Speaker (The Dick Van Dyke Show): Uuh, it's a song title! Dick: First word. Speaker: Uuh, over. Uh—beat. Pat. <i>[Slapping sounds.]</i> Dick: Crunch. Destroy. <i>[They chuckle.]</i> Speaker: What? Oh, second word. Okay second. A little world. Uh, small. Dick: Petty. Hypocritical. Two faced.

[The audience laughs.]

Speaker: That's a song title?!

Dick: Second word, is it petty or two-faced?

Speaker: You can do the whole thing. [Thumping.] The whole thing. Okay. Uh, march!

Dick: Walk! Stomp! Stomp all over people. Walk all over people. Goose step!

[The audience gets rowdy.]

Dick: Treachery. Treachery. Two-faced. Two-faced. Stab. Stab in the back! Stab in the back!

Speaker: Point! Point finger!

Dick: Finger! Accuse! Endite! Malicious accusery! That's right. Pearl Harbor! I got it!

Speaker: What is it?!

Dick: "On the Street Where You Live".

Laura: Right!
Music swells and fades.

00:03:06 Sound Effect Transition

00:03:07 Jesse Host Dick Van Dyke, welcome to *Bullseye*. It's so great to have you on the show.

00:03:10 Dick Van Dyke Guest Glad to be here, Jesse. [Laughs.]

00:03:12 Jesse Host I'm glad—I was glad to read—you know, in your new book there's dialogue that you have with Carl Reiner, who's a little bit older than you.

00:03:21 Dick Guest Three years.

00:03:22 Jesse Host You'll get there. And he of course created *The Dick Van Dyke Show*, and there's a little part where he describes that just once in a while, his—you know, his TiVo records *Dick Van Dyke* from off of some cable channel and once in a while, when he's getting ready to go bed, he'll just watch some *Dick Van Dyke* and think, "Aw, we did a good job."

00:03:43 Dick Guest [Laughing.] Yes. What was that one line you just said? Murderous—?

00:03:48 Jesse Host [Chuckling.] My favorite was, "Goose stepping!"

[They laugh.]

That's a little fascist humor on the television in 1965 or whatever it was.

00:03:54 Dick Guest Oh, what good writing. Yes.

00:03:59 Jesse Host Did you intend to be an entertainer when you were a kid?

00:04:04 Dick Guest No, I really didn't. It was too far away. You know. Something I didn't—I loved—I was in all the shows in school. I was a radio announcer at 17. And I really never thought about it. I loved

entertaining, but as a profession it was just too far away to think about. It happened incrementally.

00:04:24 Jesse Host What kind of radio announcer were you?

00:04:26 Dick Guest It was during the war. Everybody was getting drafted. I saw the ad in the paper, and I went down to audition and we had a 250-watt CBS affiliate. And I got the job! I did the news and had a disk jockey show and everything. I loved radio. I dreamed of becoming a television announcer. But things went a lot farther than that!

00:04:45 Jesse Host I mean, this was the—your—you dreaming about becoming a television announcer, this is quite literally the dawn of television.

00:04:53 Dick Guest Absolutely! I was on television back when you had to wear grey makeup and black lipstick, in 1948. I probably [*chuckling*] was in earlier than anybody!

00:05:03 Jesse Host That sounds terrifying!

00:05:05 Dick Guest [*Laughing.*] I know!

00:05:07 Jesse Host Like, not to watch. It seems fine to watch in black and white, but in real life, in front of those giant lights, it must have been awful!

00:05:14 Dick Guest Oh, it was—otherwise it was fuzzy! You—everything had to be distinct and stark. It was at the top of Mount Wilson. We had to go up to where the antenna was. That was the only studio there was.

00:05:26 Jesse Host I wanna talk to you about your showbusiness career before you got into broadcasting. And obviously, you know, television especially has been your bread and butter for most of your life.

[*Dick confirms.*]

But before you were in television, you and a friend from back home were—or was it a friend from the service? Had a—had a stage show and I don't think I entirely understand what the stage show was. Can you describe it to me?

00:05:53 Dick Guest It was something that's very popular now—karaoke! We did pantomime to records. That was our act!

00:06:00 Jesse Host I mean, it's very popular now, but people don't pay to see it! So, [*laughing*] why was—what did you do besides mouth the words?

00:06:07 Dick Guest Well, we made comedy out of it. If it was opera, we'd do it funny. There was a group called The Spike Jones Band. We did those, which are kind of—we were very, very broad. There's no doubt about that. I was kind of the Jerry Lewis of the act. But we worked in Vegas, in Reno, here, New York. It was very popular. There were several groups doing record pantomime. And I thought that was a lark and one day I'd go home and do something serious with my life, but one thing happened after another, I never got out of the business.

00:06:41 Jesse Host We actually have a clip of you on television from before *The Dick Van Dyke Show*. You had a long run with CBS where you were hosting basically every—working on every kind of television program.

[*Dick laughs.*]

You hosted *The Price is Right*, for one thing.

00:07:00 Dick Guest As a tryout! I would—they were Goodson Todman was developing the show. They'd bring in people off the street and they needed someone to be the MC. And I would go home to my wife and say, "They're doing this show of people guessing how much something costs. It'll never go!"

[Jesse laughs.]

00:07:22	Jesse	Host	What was that? 40 years ago, probably. I didn't understand it. You hosted the CBS morning show alongside someone folks might have heard of called Walter Cronkite.
00:07:28	Dick	Guest	Yes! I was 29 and didn't know what I was doing.
00:07:32	Jesse	Host	Um, this is a clip of you hosting a show called <i>CBS Cartoon Theatre</i> . It was a—you know, an anthology show, a package show, of what I presume were probably theatrical cartoons. So, what you will hear mostly is Dick Van Dyke doing physical comedy in interaction with the cartoon characters that are on a TV screen next to him.
00:07:58	Sound Effect	Transition	Music swells and fades.
00:07:59	Clip	Clip	Music: Whimsical music.

[Loud, forced laughter.]

Dick Van Dyke (CBS Cartoon Theatre): As my friends have just indicated, I'm Dick Van Dyke. Good evening! We'd all like to welcome you to *CBS Cartoon Theatre*. The stars of our show, whom you no doubt have recognized, are Heckle and Jeckle, Dicky Duck, Sour Puss, Gandy Goose, and little Roper. Each week, our stars, whom I'm very happy to call my friends, will have shared—

Heckle: Hey, boss! Hey, boss!

Dick: Yes?

Heckle: You've got snext on your sleeve!

Dick: There's nothing on my sleeve!

Jeckle: Oh, yes. You've got snext on your sleeve!

Dick: I have? What's snext?

Heckle: The show! The show's next!

[Heckle and Jeckle crow with laughter.]

00:08:45	Sound Effect	Transition	Music swells and fades.
00:08:46	Dick	Guest	Oh my god. <i>[Laughs.]</i>
00:08:47	Jesse	Host	<i>[Laughing.]</i> Some very high-end material there.
00:08:50	Dick	Guest	I have no recollection of that! The funny thing was, I came to CBS on a seven-year contract. At the end of three years, they let me go. They didn't know what to do with me and I didn't know what to do with me.
00:09:02	Jesse	Host	That's the part that I'm interested in. Did you feel like you had a place to go, in showbusiness? A target? Did you just think, "I wanna do something and I have to figure out what it is."
00:09:12	Dick	Guest	<i>[Chuckling.]</i> That's the answer! I had to figure out what it was! Because I really didn't know. I was happy to have the job. I was making more than I'd ever made in local television. But when they let me go, I had three kids and a house and didn't know what I was

gonna do. So, I—ABC gave me a gameshow, called *Mother's Day*, where did, like, diaper changing contests. [Chuckling.] It was terrible! But after the show, I would go out and audition for anything in the theatre. Except opera and ballet. I got a few callbacks and finally I got in a review, which saved my neck, and found out that I can sing and dance a little!

00:09:53 Jesse Host That's so—well, I'm curious because you had not done a lot of acting-acting before that, right?

00:10:00 Dick Guest No. No, none. Except high school.

00:10:03 Jesse Host So, what made you think that you could—you were also not a singer or dancer, particularly, so what made you think that it—that your plan was to go from the diaper changing contest to the great white way?

00:10:15 Dick Guest Uh, mostly desperation. You know. I had to make a living. And I always knew that I was agile. You know. I thought, "Well, I probably could dance." I could carry a tune. That was about it. And I was amazed at getting in this little review called *The Girls Against the Boys*. Bert Lahr and Nancy Walker. We only lasted two weeks. [Chuckles.] And we were off. And then I auditioned for *Bye Bye Birdie* and got the part. Which, of course, changed my life.

00:10:44 Jesse Host I can—I can only imagine. I mean, what was it like to go into that audition with what I'm sure were a sea of, you know, seasoned Broadway professionals? You know, super-triple threats. And you know, you're like, "Well, I can carry a tune and I'm very charming when I smile."

00:11:05 Dick Guest [They laugh.] Right! I, like many other times in my early career, my heart was in my mouth. I was scared to death. And I got up and sang a little song from *Music Man* and did a little soft-shoe.

00:11:17 Jesse Host What song from the *Music Man* did you sing?

00:11:20 Dick Guest [Singing.] "There was love all around, but I never heard—" And I sang "Amy", that Ray Bolger had done and did a little soft-shoe. And Gerald Champion walked up on stage and said, "You have the part," and I almost fell into a faint. I have a feeling he saw himself, because we were exactly the same size and physique and I think maybe he thought—

I said, "You know, I really can't dance."

00:11:54 Jesse Host He said, "We'll teach you." And that's when—it was like flying, learning those dance steps. My god, it was fun for me. Let's take a listen to another clip from *The Dick Van Dyke Show*. And my guest is Dick Van Dyke. So, Rob—Dick Van Dyke's character—is a television writer on the show, TV comedy writer, and he has to have his show's sponsor over for dinner, in this episode. And he and his wife, Laura, have been fussing over everything, but the whole thing is going—you'll be surprised to learn—very poorly.

00:12:18 Sound Effect Transition Music swells and fades.

00:12:19 Clip Clip [Muffled sounds of conversation.]

Speaker 1: How 'bout a drink!

Speaker 2: Martha and I don't drink! I always say that alcohol is too rich for my carburetor!

[Everyone laughs.]

Dick: Well, there's nothing funny about that!

[Everyone laughs.]

Speaker 1: No! That's not funny. Pithy, though.

Laura: Yes it is! It's pithy. By the way, what did you think of last week's show?

Speaker 2: Well, I thought last week's show was very funny.

Speaker 1: Boy, so did I.

Speaker 2: If you like slapstick humor.

Speaker 1: Well, you can overdo it!

Speaker 2: I, of course, like slapstick humor.

Speaker 1: I love it!

Speaker 2: But not on my show.

Speaker 1: No, not—not on our *[inaudible]*. No, no.

Speaker 2: Not every week.

Speaker 1: No, it's too much.

Speaker 2: I like it once in a while!

Speaker 1: That's me! I like it once in a while.

Laura: But generally, you both enjoyed the show?

Speaker 2: *[Simultaneously.]* Yes I did.

Martha: *[Simultaneously.]* No, I didn't.

[Everyone laughs.]

Laura: Are you sure you wouldn't care for an hors d'oeuvre?

Dick: Yeah, or a drink?

Martha: We don't drink.

Dick: Oh, *[chuckles awkwardly]* too rich for your carburetor. Music swells and fades.

00: Clip Clip

00:13:16 Sound Transition
 Effect

00:13:18 Dick Guest *[They chuckle.]*

00:13:22 Jesse Host Oh, what great dialogue.
What—when did you—when did you audition for *The Dick Van Dyke Show*? Describe to me where you were at and—

00:13:28 Dick Guest I didn't audition! I think Carl had seen me in *Bye Bye Birdie* and thought I would be good in the part and sent me about 10 or 11 scripts that he'd written. And I had had a pilot of my own—I threw it out the window. The writing was just brilliant, and I said, "Let me know when to come!" I took a week off from the show and went out and did the pilot. No, I got hired kind of sight unseen. I didn't have to audition.

00:13:54 Jesse Host I—you know, it's funny because Carl Reiner famously wrote the show for himself to star in. I think they made a pilot, as well, with him onscreen.

[Dick confirms.]

And, you know, it didn't go, and his agent basically convinced him, "Look, you've got half a season's worth of—you've got 13 scripts that are solid gold, don't throw—don't throw the baby away with the bathwater, here." What was it like to go in and not just—you know, I think that for an actor, you often hear about it being a little bit weird to play a role based on a real person in front of that real person? But what is it like when that—not only is that person your boss, but he is also a guy who failed at playing himself?

00:14:43 Dick Guest *[Laughs.]* Well, I saw the pilot. And he really was not right. I mean, he was good. He was anxiety-ridden and nervous. And it didn't—it really didn't sell—it wasn't funny. So, he let me, literally, play myself. He was great at listening to your cadence, your—the way you spoke—and wrote it that way. So, all you had to do was say the lines. He did that with every actor. It was amazing!

00:15:12 Jesse Host Did you meet your co-star, Mary Tyler Moore, like when you showed up for work the first day?

00:15:15 Dick Guest *[Laughing.]* When I showed up for work—for the rehearsal, yeah! She was wonderful! I—she was about 12 years younger and I said, "Isn't she a little young?" As it turned out, she was unbelievably good. Within two or three shows, she picked up the comedy and went with it.

00:15:33 Jesse Host I would have been very uncomfortable working with Mary Tyler Moore, because I have a kind of like a moral feeling that no one that good looking should be that funny.

[Dick wheezes with laughter.]

Like, it's kind of no fair. Like, you're a very handsome man yourself, Mr. Van Dyke, but at least you have a big nose. You know what I mean?!

00:15:53 Dick Guest *[Laughing.]* Thank you! Yeah. Oh, have I got nose jokes.

[They chuckle.]

00:15:57 Jesse Host But I mean, it's like a—it's a great comfort to me that at least you're not perfect.

[They laugh.]

Mary Tyler Moore's so good looking and so funny, it's like, "Give me a break, lady!"

00:16:06 Dick Guest Yeah! She had never done comedy and the first couple of shows, she was searching. But she had Morey and Rose Marie and me, all who had some timing. And she picked it up so fast! And became probably the best comedienne ever. And you're right! The best looking one, too.

00:16:25 Jesse Host When you were doing that show—I know that—I know you got sober in middle age.

[Dick confirms.]

00:16:38 Dick Guest Were you drinking when you were doing that show?
Ah... I was a normal drinker, then. It happened—after that, it began to catch up with me. I'd gone to England to do Chitty Chitty Bang Bang. I did a few movies in a row there and I don't know whether it was pressure or what, but I suddenly found myself drinking more than I should. And—

00:16:58 Jesse Host How did you—I mean, how did you recognize—did you recognize that at some—?

00:17:01 Dick Guest Yes. Yes, I never drank at work. And I never drank publicly, really. I drank at home. But instead of having a martini, I would have three or four martinis. And I'd wake up with a kind of a hangover in the morning. I think I was very shy, and I found that a martini or two loosened me up and suddenly I became really sociable! I think that was the reason that I started. But I had no idea that I had addiction in my personality.

00:17:29 Jesse Host We've got even more with Dick Van Dyke still to come. Stay with us. It's *Bullseye*, from MaximumFun.org and NPR.

00:17:37 Promo Clip **Music:** Relaxed music.

Guy Raz: I'm Guy Raz and on NPR's *How I Built This*, how Tim Ferriss—as an entrepreneur, author, investor, and podcaster—turned himself into a multimillion-dollar brand. Subscribe or listen now.

[Music fades out.]

00:17:54 Promo Clip **Music:** Mid-tempo, upbeat music.

Jo Firestone: Hi, I'm Jo Firestone.

Manolo Moreno: And I'm Manolo Moreno.

Jo: And we host Dr. Gameshow—a podcast where listeners submit games and we play them regardless of quality, with a dozen listeners from around the world.

Manolo: We've had folks call in from as far as Sweden, South Africa, and the Philippines.

Jo: Here's an example. This is a game we called “Zooney Deschanel”, where you turn a celebrity's name into an animal pun. Do you have an example, Manolo?

Manolo: Brad Gorilla Pitt.

Jo: Oh, that's a pun on gorilla pits?

Manolo: Yep.

Jo: [*Doubtfully.*] I don't—that's—

Manolo: That's Brad Pitt.

Jo: Oh, okay. Yep.

Manolo: That's a high-quality game that you could expect.

Jo: Dr. Gameshow has new episodes every other Wednesday, on Maximum Fun.

Manolo: Check us out, please!

[*Music fades out.*]

00:18:39	Jesse	Promo	Hey, all. It's Jesse again with a reminder that now, the end of the year, is a great time to support your local NPR members station. Do it now. Go to Donate.NPR.org/bullseye . And thanks.
00:18:52	Music	Transition	Relaxed, jazzy music.
00:18:57	Jesse	Host	Welcome back to <i>Bullseye</i> . I'm Jesse Thorn. My guest is Dick Van Dyke. He and I talked in 2015. He is, of course, an actor and comedian who's been working for over 70 years. Van Dyke turned 95 earlier this month. He's also an author of several books. His most recent is called <i>Keep Moving and Other Tips and Truths About Aging</i> . Let's get back into it.
00:19:33	Dick	Guest	Did it take a lot for you to get onstage to be as... kind of big and warm and sociable as your character in entertainment is? No, I never was very nervous. I was nervous the opening night of <i>Bye Bye Birdie</i> , on Broadway. Scared to death. But most—I loved to perform so and working with an audience that I never really got very nervous.
00:19:47	Jesse	Host	Was there something different about how you felt in a private situation than in a public situation? And what do you think it was?
00:19:54	Dick	Guest	I don't know! I loved performing to an audience, to a mass of people. One on one was when I was a little—I used to have a hard time in interviews, even. But I finally got over it. And the drinking just slowly disappeared, little by little.
00:20:11	Jesse	Host	You write in your new book that part of it was, although you're not—you believe in a higher power but aren't necessarily religious—that part of it was prayer, for you.
00:20:19	Dick	Guest	Absolutely. Yeah. I think—well, I don't know whether you're praying to yourself or to the Almighty, or what. I'm just saying that it works. It helped me a lot. And I still do.
00:20:31	Jesse	Host	How did you find it? I mean—
00:20:33	Dick	Guest	Well, I was raised in a Presbyterian family and I had been a deacon in the church. I had taught Sunday school, out on Long Island, to 13 year olds. So, I—you know, there was a connection, a spiritual connection, for me even though I kind of disconnected from the institutional church.
00:20:54	Jesse	Host	Was it natural to you when you were—when you were having really difficult problems with alcoholism—and I think you write also in the book that you had—you had gone into AA and you had done various other things that hadn't helped you solve the problem or

			had helped you but not enough. Was it natural to you to pray for help?
00:21:15	Dick	Guest	Yes. Oh yeah. I'm a prayer who says a lot of "thank you"s. I still do when something good happens. I always say, "Thank you for that." 'Cause I have been awfully lucky in my life. I recommend it for anybody. It's—it's—there's something that—I don't know what it is—wholesome about it. But it's almost like a confession, getting things off your mind. I—for me, it's worthy of doing.
00:21:44	Jesse	Host	You also write in the book that [<i>chuckles</i>] there's—there's sort of—there's bigger chapter and littler chapters. One of them is a little poem that you wrote about writing down your thoughts and feelings and your plans for the next day in a notebook next to your bed, to let them go.
00:22:00	Dick	Guest	Yes, that's true.
00:22:01	Jesse	Host	So that you can come back to them.
			[<i>Dick confirms.</i>]
			And I wonder if part of the appeal of prayer, for you, is that feeling that you are letting something out into the world or letting something travel to God and thus not having to feel like you have to hold it.
00:22:20	Dick	Guest	I think you're probably right. I kind of handed it over so I don't have to—[<i>laughs</i>] Mel Brookes went to a psychiatrist and said, "During the night I get wonderful ideas. In the morning, I wake up and I can't remember them."
			He said, "Write it down!"
			So, he put a pencil and paper beside. One night, he had a brilliant idea and he looked at his notebook in the morning and it said, "Write it down."
			[<i>They laugh.</i>]
00:22:47	Jesse	Host	That's a stupid joke. [<i>Laughs.</i>]
			It's <i>Bullseye</i> . I'm Jesse Thorn. I'm talking to Dick Van Dyke. His new book is called <i>Keep Moving and Other Tips and Truths About Aging</i> . And since I've got Dick Van Dyke here, I probably oughta play some <i>Mary Poppins</i> , huh?
00:23:04	Dick	Guest	Oh my god.
00:23:05	Jesse	Host	You're out there, you've probably seen <i>Mary Poppins</i> . I mean, if you haven't you probably should 'cause it's great. So, obviously one of the characters Dick Van Dyke plays in <i>Mary Poppins</i> is Bert the chimney sweep and this is one of his signature tunes, "Chim Chim Cher-ee".
00:23:20	Sound Effect	Transition	Music swells and fades.
00:23:21	Clip	Clip	"Chim Chim Cher-ee" from the musical <i>Mary Poppins</i> .
			<i>Chim chiminey, chim chiminey, chim chim cher-ee A sweep is as lucky as lucky can be Chim chiminey, chim chiminey, chim chim cher-oo Good luck will rub off when I shakes hands with you Or blow me a kiss, and that's lucky too</i>
00:23:41	Sound Effect	Transition	Music swells and fades.

00:23:42 Dick Guest Now that—doing that little piece there, the cockney wasn't that bad. But—

[Jesse makes a skeptical sound and then laughs helplessly.]

00:23:50 Jesse Host But I've taken it on the chin. Oh my god. All my life.
[Laughing.] It's terrible!

00:23:52 Dick Guest It really is.

00:23:53 Jesse Host It's—there's a few moments of a little bit of something, but—

00:23:56 Dick Guest Here and there I almost—I almost got it. There was a tweet I saw that Helen Mirren, Judy Dench, Jeremy Irons—who are asked, “Who did the worst British accent in the history of movies?” And of course, I won. Hands down. I'm number one in that respect. But I—you see, I was working with an entire cast of Brits. Nobody said to me, “You know, you really oughta work on that.” I was so busy with the singing and dancing, I didn't—

00:24:25 Jesse Host I mean, seems like a testament to the power of the rest of your performance.

[They giggle.]

00:24:33 Dick Guest It really is a wonderful performance and a wonderful film. I always say, “It's not a cockney! It's a little shire way in the north of England that had been settled by people from Ohio.”

[They laugh.]

00:24:45 Jesse Host Um, I—in this—so, I was so happy to have run across this interview that you did in 1964, whenever it was. And it was while *Mary Poppins* was in post-production, which was quite an elaborate post-production because they were—you know—there's all these animated sequences and special effect sequences in the film. You said, in this interview, “I thought that the movie of *Bye Bye Birdie* *[laughing]* stunk,” basically. I'm paraphrasing here. But you did not mince words about how you felt that the film had messed up the stage show.

00:25:41 Dick Guest But you said, “But I just made a Disney movie that I think is something that will be a landmark film of its type.” Which, of course, it is. But I think it's rare for someone to have so strong of a feeling on—especially a film project. And I wonder what about working on that film made you feel like, “Wow, this actually is something really special.”?

00:25:41 Dick Guest We all felt it. Almost every day, there was something magical happening. The songs the Sherman brothers wrote and the—Mark and Dee Dee Wood who did the choreography—everything just had life to it. I'd been in movies where the producer comes in in the morning and says, “Oh, the dailies were great.” And you know they weren't. But we just all felt that something really magical was happening. We couldn't wait to come to work. Even though it was hard! Some of the dances nearly killed me *[laughs]* at that time. But I just—we all knew. It just was gonna be a good movie.

00:26:16 Jesse Host I wonder if, after *The Dick Van Dyke Show* ended, you ever found yourself wondering, “Huh. Am I just gonna be—is my career gonna be the guy from *The Dick Van Dyke Show*?”

00:26:27 Dick Guest Oh yeah. And that's what happened. I was either Bert or Rob Petrie. Strangely enough, it was supposed to be Peet-ry. Nobody

told me. I said Pet-rie on the—one the... first show! Nobody every corrected me.

[They laugh.]

No, I really—fortunately I ended up doing a movie called *The Morning After*. A good movie about alcoholism. So good, as a matter of fact, that it—they show it at a lot of the rehab centers, because the guy doesn't make it. We got in quite a bit of trouble with the National Council on Alcoholism. They wanted it to have a happy ending and we let him die. And it's had a really positive effect on a lot of people in rehab.

00:27:13 Jesse Host
00:27:15 Dick Guest

Were you already sober by the time you did that movie?
Just barely. Juuuust barely. And *[laughing]* I noticed at the wrap party, nobody drank anything but orange juice. It kind of affected everybody. But—and I did *Chitty Bang Bang* and the one about smoking, which was so much fun to do, with Norman Lear. So, I got a lot of good projects.

00:27:35 Jesse Host

I wanna play a clip from a project of yours that I had never heard anything about until I started reading, preparing for this interview. It was—you know, the 1970s were the golden age of television comedy variety. And you had a show called *Van Dyke and Company*.

[Dick confirms.]

Among the cast of *Van Dyke and Company* were Bob Einstein—who folks might know as Super Dave Osborne—and a guy called Andy Kaufman. And this thing—this show ran very briefly, but won—

00:28:07 Dick Guest
00:28:09 Jesse Host
00:28:10 Dick Guest
00:28:11 Jesse Host

12 shows.

But won an Emmy!

[Laughing.] I know!

And, um—so, one of the gags on the show is that Andy Kaufman would interrupt you when you were trying to do something. He would interrupt you, in character. And he would just do these—you know, these weird Andy Kaufman things. And so, in this clip, you're doing a sketch with John Denver—pretty much the perfect person to be doing a sketch with.

00:28:38 Dick Guest
00:28:40 Jesse Host
00:28:44 Sound Transition
Effect
00:28:45 Clip Clip

Full costume and everything.

Yeah. And Andy Kaufman interrupts you, in character.

Music swells and fades.

[The audience applauds. As the bit goes on, they laugh regularly.]

Dick (*Van Dyke and Company*): What are you doing here?!

Andy: *[In a nasally voice.]* Remember, I was on your—your show? You said that I could come back.

Dick: Yeah, well, first of all don't believe everything I say. And second of all, you're interrupting the sketch, here!

Andy: Okay.

Dick: Okay... *[Clears throat.]* Ladies and gentlemen, this is Andy. He's the man who was on our Fonzie look-alike contest, last week. He came out and he told a joke, and he was terrific. And I'm sure we're gonna have him back on our show sometime.

John: You know, Dick, I don't know about you but this puppy suit is getting very uncomfortable.

Dick: I know it, John. I'm sorry. Look, I'll take care of it, okay?

Andy: Why don't you—think you could take off your puppy suit and when you go down to take it off, I could play a record and then do a joke.

00:29:35 Sound Effect Transition Music swells and fades.

00:29:36 Dick Guest *[They laugh.]*

I think we had Andy on a lot. We just loved him. We—when he first auditioned for all the writers, he would play his tom-toms and did his thing. All the writers got up and walked out on him. They said, "This guy's nothing! You know, what is he?" They didn't understand what he was doing at all. Neither did I, but it was funny!

00:29:58 Jesse Host What—I mean, how did—how did he—okay, so, I can see him coming in and playing tom-toms and everybody walking out. That part I get. So, how did the second part come in where he *[laughing]* came on the show all the time?

00:30:10 Dick Guest The audience loved it. Loved the fact that he would come in and interrupt it. And he was getting such good feedback from the audience that we just had to use him. But he—you know, he was a transcendental meditation guy and we'd be standing—one day, we're standing out in the hall arguing about something. I look down and realize that Andy is sitting there in a lotus position meditating. He did that a lot. He was very strange. It was—he—very hard to talk to, personally. You couldn't get a conversation going with Andy. I don't know what it was. *[Chuckles.]*

00:30:43 Jesse Host But you—but you have a picture in the new book of you in some promo shots from the '50s from before you were a success, let's say. Before you were a grand success. And one of the things you say is that you always wanted to look like a success, even before you were. And yeah, I wonder—I wonder how you came to value looking good. I mean, that's one of the things that I remember about *The Dick Van Dyke Show* is Rob Petrie always looked great. And—Always had a good suit.

00:31:16 Dick Guest Yeah, exactly. So, why do you think that was important to you?

00:31:17 Jesse Host My father, who didn't have any money at all, was kind of a clothes horse. He was built like Fred Astaire. He would go to Chicago and buy a Bond suit, two pair of pants, and a coat for \$40. But somehow, on him they looked good. He could put anything on. And he was always a sharp dresser for a guy who didn't have the money to do it. And I admired my dad, and I liked the way Astaire and Cary Grant and Walter Pidgeon—I wanted to emulate those guys. Today, kids wanna emulate *[inaudible]*. It's the strangest thing about generations.

00:32:00 Jesse Host And he was a salesman, right?

00:32:02 Dick Guest A traveling salesman for Sunshine Biscuits. He—everybody called him Cookie.

[Jesse chuckles.]

He was a very funny guy, except when he tried to get in front of an audience. Funny man, though.

00:32:13 Jesse Host
00:32:15 Dick Guest

Was he around a lot when you were a kid?

No, he was gone five days a week, really. On the road. So, I didn't see him that often. His dad—my grandfather Van Dyke, was kind of my mentor and had a great effect on me. Great man.

00:32:29 Jesse Host

One of the things that your book is about is kind of bringing joy to everyday life—pursuing the things that enliven you on a regular basis.

00:32:44 Dick Guest

Did I tell you the title I wanted? That they wouldn't buy? *What to Do While Circling the Drain.*

[Jesse laughs.]

00:32:56 Jesse Host

It's a great title! They wouldn't go for it. *[Laughs.]*

The book has a very genial tone, I can understand why they might—

[They laugh.]

00:33:15 Dick Guest

Um, but I wonder if that was something that you always did or something that you've learned in—I've heard you describe what you're living now as your third life.

Yes. Absolutely. I'm on a third marriage. I lost two wives to cancer. And I'm having a life that very few people in my generation get. I'm extremely happy. I have my quartet that I sing with constantly. I'm a computer animator. And life is just the best and I don't worry! I'm way past being anxiety-ridden.

00:33:39 Jesse Host
00:33:41 Dick Guest

Was that always the case?

No. I worried a lot about my kids—particularly during the '60s and the '70s. I pity a parent now, with teenagers. It's worse than ever. But my kids ended up being absolutely non-toxic to the world. They're great people.

[They chuckle.]

00:34:00 Jesse Host

When your—when your second wife died... I can't imagine that you expected that she would die before you did.

00:34:13 Dick Guest

No! No, both of them. The husband always goes first. You just assume that.

00:34:19 Jesse Host

And I wonder—I wonder if... you had any idea of what your life could be like without her.

00:34:31 Dick Guest

Oh, I have never—I didn't have a bachelorhood. I went from my mother *[laughing]* directly into a marriage. I don't know what it is to be alone. I have to share life with someone. I can't—I have friends who are bachelors and enjoy it. Being alone at facing life alone just isn't—I have to be able to share it with someone, to turn and speak to someone. I never dreamed that what happened to me was gonna happen. And I ran into an angel half my age and were just—we just celebrated our fourth wedding anniversary on the 29th.

00:35:07 Jesse Host

What was it like for you in the time in between?

00:35:09 Dick Guest

Uh, bad. It was bad. I had a lot of friends, you know. I was kind of a sitting duck there, for a while, for widows.

[Jesse chuckles.]

00:35:22	Jesse	Host	I was—I'd find a meatloaf on the front porch or <i>[giggles]</i> some chicken soup or something. Look, if I'm—if I'm a widow and I found out that Dick Van Dyke is single? I'm making a meatloaf.
00:35:29	Dick	Guest	<i>[They laugh.]</i> Yeah, but it was kind of—it was fun but <i>[inaudible]</i> .
00:35:31	Jesse	Host	Good looking guy, you got a nice house in Malibu.
00:35:37	Dick	Guest	<i>[They laugh.]</i> I have never walked up to a strange woman in my life. I never had the nerve. I was at the SAG Awards and saw this girl back in the greenroom. And I was talking to a movie star—Gwyneth Paltrow, I think—and I saw her. I said, "Excuse me." I went over and said, "Hi, my name is Dick." And sat right down. And she said, "Weren't you in <i>Mary Poppins</i> or something?" She had no idea who I was. But for the first time in my life, I kept at it. I kept at it. She would bring me dinner at night. Sometimes she would come by and cook me a dinner. And I proposed, I think, for a year before she finally decided to do it. We were a little worried about the age difference, but no one ever said a word.
00:36:20	Jesse	Host	What kind of plans do you make when you're 90?
00:36:23	Dick	Guest	Hardly any. <i>[Laughs.]</i> Hardly any! You don't make plans. You—except for the day. I always make a list before I go to bed at night of what I'm going to do in the morning and it always turns out to be way too ambitious. No, living life day-to-day becomes important. And I've gotten a few 90 years old guys up off their... wheelchairs or off their walkers and I've—if I can get them to the gym for 10 or 12 minutes a day, they'll start—they'll start walking. You can't believe what it does.
00:36:55	Jesse	Host	What do you do at the gym?
00:36:57	Dick	Guest	I go in the morning. I do a treadmill. And then I do regular lifting weights. The whole routine of weightlifting. I never overdo it. If I—my body starts to feel tired, I quit. I don't have—I'm not bound to do the whole circuit. And I do a lot in the water, get in the pool, 'cause that's good because I have all the infirmities of the—my age. Arthritis and CPOD and peripheral—all those things. But keeping moving's the answer. And blueberries for breakfast.
00:37:32	Jesse	Host	<i>[They chuckle.]</i> Well, Dick Van Dyke, I am so grateful to you for taking the time to come be on <i>Bullseye</i> . What a—what an honor to get to meet you and talk to you.
00:37:38	Dick	Guest	It's been more than a pleasure. Thank you, Jesse. I hope I answered everything sufficiently.
00:37:42	Jesse	Host	Absolutely!
00:37:43	Dick	Guest	<i>[Laughing.]</i> Okay.
00:37:44	Jesse	Host	Dick Van Dyke from 2015—maybe one of the best entertainers ever? His book, <i>Keep Moving and Other Tips and Truths About Aging</i> is great for readers of just about any age. Please go give it a look. And, of course, happy 95 th birthday, Dick Van Dyke.

00:37:59 00:38:03	Music Jesse	Transition Host	<p>Relaxed, bright, thumpy music.</p> <p>That's the end of another episode of <i>Bullseye</i>. <i>Bullseye</i> is created in the homes of me and the staff of Maximum Fun, in and around great Los Angeles, California—where, across the street from me, they have just started piledriving. They're building two houses and a piledriver is involved. It may make some guest appearances on this show.</p> <p>Our program, produced by speaking into microphones. Our producer is Kevin Ferguson. Jesus Ambrosio and Jordan Kauwling are our associate producers. We get help from Casey O'Brien and Kristen Bennett. Our interstitial music is by Dan Wally, also known as DJW. Our theme song is by The Go! Team. Thanks very much to them and to their label, Memphis Industries. If you wanna hear the latest about what we're up to, you can keep up with our show on Twitter, Facebook, and YouTube. We post all our interviews there.</p>
00:38:57	Promo	Promo	<p>And I think that's about it. Just remember: all great radio hosts have a signature signoff.</p> <p>Speaker: <i>Bullseye with Jesse Thorn</i> is a production of MaximumFun.org and is distributed by NPR.</p> <p><i>[Music fades out.]</i></p>